

Walking to Public Transit: Steps to Help Meet Physical Activity Recommendations

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Nearly half of Americans do not meet the Surgeon General's recommendation of ≥ 30 minutes of physical activity daily. Some transit users may achieve 30 minutes of physical activity daily solely by walking to and from transit. This study estimates the total daily time spent walking to and from transit and the predictors of achieving 30 minutes of physical activity daily by doing so.

Transit-associated walking times for 3312 transit users were examined among the 105,942 adult respondents to the 2001 National Household Travel Survey, a telephone-based survey sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation to assess American travel behavior. Americans who used transit spent a median of 19 minutes daily walking to and from transit; 29% achieve ≥ 30 minutes of physical activity a day solely by walking to and from transit. In multivariate analysis, rail users, minorities, people in households earning $< \$15,000$ a year, and people in high-density urban areas were more likely to spend ≥ 30 minutes walking to and from transit daily.

Walking to and from public transportation can help physically inactive populations, especially low-income and minority groups, attain the recommended level of daily physical activity. Increased access to public transit may help promote and maintain active lifestyles. Results from this study may contribute to health impact assessment (HIA) studies that evaluate the impact of proposed public transit systems on physical activity levels, and thereby may influence choices made by transportation planners.

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